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VENN
AND HIS
M E R M Y D O N S:
OR, THE
Linen-Draper Capotted:
BEING A
Serious and Seasonable Advice
To the
C I T I Z E N S
O F
L O N D O N,
Occasioned by the Indirect Practices used in the late
ELECTION of SHERIFFS.

Written by a Citizen of *London*.

L O N D O N, Printed in the Year 1679.

This image shows a heavily damaged, light-colored document page. The page is covered in faint, illegible markings that appear to be bleed-through from the reverse side of the paper. These markings include what might be a date, some numbers, and possibly a title or heading. A prominent, thick horizontal line is drawn near the bottom right corner of the page. The overall appearance is that of a severely damaged or poorly preserved historical document.

Serious and Seasonable ADVICE

To the
CITIZENS of LONDON, &c.

Friends and Fellow-Citizens.

THE End of these few Lines is to persuade Peace, which every man pretends to covet; but the end is not attainable without the use, means, and avoiding that which is of a contrary Importance. Some few things are here pointed at, which have occasioned disturbance in Families, hatred and animosity among Neighbours, disorders in the City, oppression and violence in the Nation. That such things may not happen amongst us any more, is the design of this Paper, and shall be the constant and hearty Prayers of the Author.

It behooves every good Citizen to have a watchful Eye toward such Persons and Actions as would cast Scorn and Contempt upon the meanest Instrument of Government. It is rare if any man be made desperately wicked at once. Evil is propagated by degrees. Hard thoughts of our Superior, are often followed with Hatred, and after with Sedition and Rebellion, great things taking their rise from small and insensible beginnings. A Cloud of the bigness of a Hand, spreads the face of the Heavens. Thus a disobedient Servant proves a bad Master, and a worse Citizen. If we slacken

in the least the Chain of our Duty, the Devil quickly takes advantage. Some men who at first detested Rebellion, have laughed and talked themselves into Disobedience, for which, perhaps, being worthily punished, hath so exasperated their minds, so as nothing wanted for revenge, but an opportunity. Others there be, whose great felicity lies in hearing and telling News: These are a sort of Busie-bodies, and men for the most part, of small imployment, and as little discretion, that receive all they hear (especially such things as will please their Party) without examining the probability of its being true or false; and having heard some odd Story, go (big with it) to the next Club, where it is related with abundance of formality; and if it be any thing relating to the Government, it isten to one but some Surmise or sad Descant, as bad as Malice can invent, is added over and above. A ready way to introduce a disaffection toward those in Authority, and prepare mens minds for Disobedience and Rebellion: Therefore such Malapert Talkers, who are always finding fault, and like Flies, are apt to dwell upon every Sore, ought to be Brow-beaten, scorned, and opposed by every honest Citizen, as the Bane of Society, and Pests of the Commonwealth. Let us all endeavour to live like Men, and Christians, and boldly reprove such as offer to put Affronts and Contempts upon Authority: A far readier way to cure their itching Malady, than by taking pleasure in their Fooleries and impertinencies. Let every man in his station pursue those things that make for PEACE. We are all Members of one City, Subjects of one Kingdom: all embarked in the same Vessel, and if that suffers Shipwreck, none can promise immunity to themselves. In a word, Let us fear God, honour the King, and not meddle with those that are given to change.

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There is also another sort of men among us, so well conceited as to think themselves fit to be sharers in the Government, and are always complaining that something is amiss. Men of petulant testy humours, and factious Spirits, never contented, never pleased. Is it not a shame to think what a foolish and ridiculous attempt was lately made to introduce an Officer among us? Did they fancy the Government would be Trickt into a Sheriff? What was the Man? How qualified, that such sinister and undue practices were used about his Election? I believe but few men will bespeak him Master of any extraordinary measure of Reason, Judgment or Piety. As for his Estate, that was granted deficient, even by his own Faction, as appears by their Subscriptions towards the upholding of his Grandeur. Certainly *They have need of a Bird that give a Great for an Owl!* What then? Why the truth is, though nothing can be more ridiculous than Empty Boldnes, yet this mans confident and seditious speaking, which made him obnoxious to the Law, hath advanced his Reputation with some men to an high rate, who otherwise might have passed along unobserved. Is this an Office to be carried on with Contribution? Is it not one of the highest places of Trust in this great City? Ought not he, who ever is Elected to that dignity, to be able to bear the charge without auxiliaries, as well for his own security as the Cities honour? For should he fail in that particular, he must not onely be ruined, but the Office fall lame by the way. Yet this man, till he saw his Party confounded, offered without blushing to accept it. It is an Office of that Trust, as ought to be committed to the care of none but persons of known Integrity, Religion, and Honesty, that in times of danger and disorder, may keep the Peace, and not encourage Sedition and Tumult: one firm in his Allegiance to

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his Majesty, and a true Protestant according to the Church of *England*. What design these men had in offering their purses so freely toward setting up this Puppet Sheriff, God and their own hearts only know; but certainly it hath an ill aspect, for that during his Office he must have been Pensioner to the meanest Trades-man of his Party. Some few Quakers afforded him their Votes, but their frugality and principles, I suppose, would hardly allow them to club toward Feasting or Fine Clothes. Whatsoever their end was, they are not to be approved, who seek to acquire good ends by bad means; and in this *Essay* they shewed the Popish party a new device (though they have already more tricks than are good) by Subscriptions and Cabals to introduce some of their Favourites into places of Honour and Trust.

Consider the danger and inconvenience that ariseth from the multitude of Pamphlets that are published every day, filled with Lies and Falshood, to the dishonour of God and Religion: containing base and unworthy reflections upon most men of the greatest Authority in the Nation, not sparing at some turns (though in cunning and canting terms) the Person and Government of his Sacred Majesty. Are not all publick Actions turned into *Ridicule* by these petty Scribblers, who have hardly Bread to eat, but what they receive for their Weekly Copy? Do we not all know that not long since *Poor Robins Intelligence* was Weekly published, where the Author took upon him to make a *Laughing-stock* of any person, to whom he was prompted, either by money or malice, or to fill up an empty space in his Pamphlet? And though he forbore to name the persons, yet pointed at them by such Notes and Characters, as they were easily known by any that were of the Neighbourhood, to the great disturbance of Families,

Families and breach of Charity among Citizens, till for abusing a person of Honour, Authority took occasion to chastize his insolence by stopping the Press: which particulars, as to him, had been omitted, but that he, or such another, hath, and still doth take upon him to traduce and asperse the Justice of the Nation, in unworthy and unseemly terms, not caring whether the matter be true or false, so it will help to sell the Book. It is true the Lord Major hath taken some care about those Pamphlets, but still there remains a duty upon every private Citizen that may tend much to suppressing the mischiefs thereby arising: for if in stead of reading them with delight and complacency, they and their Authors were discountenanced, it would contribute much to the quiet and tranquility of the City and Nation. Let each man observe this *decorum*, and for want of reward, those that write them would soon be compelled to turn their Pens to some honeste employment. It is no small trouble to men that are peaceably disposed, to see how eagerly the multitude pursue those mischievous vanities which commonly the sharper and more Satyrical they are against those in place and authority, find the most ready and approved reception, though to speak plain, it is a certain indication of a depraved constitution, when men are better pleased with things sowre and crude, than with what affords wholesom nutritment. And the youth of this City, with some others, who are but Children in Understanding, are as it were insensibly tainted with dislike of the Government, by receiving those seeds of Sedition which afterwards afford an Harvest too plentiful, and upon every occasion and opportunity is ready to break forth into open Rebellion against those, whom by the Law of Nature and Religion they are bound to obey, esteem, and honour.

For my own part I am as deeply sensible of the late horrid

horrid and damnable Plot against the person of his sacred Majesty, and the Protestant Religion as any man, and am verily persuaded the King himself, and those about him, are sufficiently satisfied how industriously it hath been carried on, contrived, and fomented by the *Romish* Emissaries both at home and abroad. But with all, I do profess, I think it our greatest prudence and duty to leave the prosecution of those villanous Conspirators to his Majesty, and those whom he is pleased to authorize for that purpose, and not for us to meddle with censuring their proceedings, either for Method, Place, or Time, but to rest satisfied with what they shall think fit to do in the matter, lest we be found among the number of those who are *heady, high-minded, and speak evil of dignities, and that would rob the King of his Diadem.* For what is it less, if we cry out that those who sit at the Helm are either ignorant, or abettors, or favourers of such horrid designs ; in the one case we presume our selves fitter to govern than they ; and in the other, we render them, so much as in us lies, odious to all men.

We all know the *Romanists* have been busie ever since the Reformation, to make us again taste of their Colocinths and Gourds, yet through the goodness of God, and the prudence of our Governours their most secre特 Plots have been discovered, their Designs baffled, and all their attempts proved the ruine of the Contrivers. Neither have they been yet so formidable, as to offer at any acts of open hostility, unless it can be said they made the Presbyterians and Independents their Drudges in the late Times to do their work. And if so, when ever you see them again labouning at the same Oar, conclude they are still servile the ends of the same Masters, or setting up for themselves. And here it will not be amiss to consider how things stand now, and

and what motives were frequently used for introducing the late unnatural War. Did not the Factious of those Times seduce the people, by making them believe the late King, of blessed Memory, was inclined to Popery, or at least a favourer of it? Were not Fears and Jealousies the main Engines used by those bloody Miscreants to serve their turns? And is there not strong presumptions that the same things are endeavoured by the same sort of men to be acted over again? Is it not daily inculcated what danger we are in from the Papists, and many a dreadful Story told of Slavery, Popery, Tyranny, and Arbitrary Government, and God knows what? Does any man think that the Magistrates are swallowed up in a Supine Negligence? Hath his Majesty, think you, no care of us, nor of himself? Hath he not always with much fervor protested his adherence to the Protestant Religion? Did he not graciously offer the last Parliament to sign any Bill they should frame for security thereof after his decease? Is he then so zealous for its preservation after his death, and shall we imagine he will not protect us in the profession of it during his happy Reign? (which God long continue.) Away then with these Fears and Jealousies which are fomented by men of ambitious designs, turbulent spirits, and aspiring minds. Look upon them all as Tricks of the old Trade. Did his Majesty ever do any thing that looked like betraying us into Slavery? For Gods sake, Sirs, Consider whither we are going; let us not be undone again by the same methods we were before. Are there not some at this day that long to be fingering the Crown-Lands, and Bishops Revenues. Be not ensnared with their wicked Contrivances, and specious pretences; and let not us deny that to our Sovereign, which by the common suffrages of Christ and his Apostles was awarded to Heathen Emperours.

But it may be said, we are yet in danger of being outwitted by the *Jesuites* and their bloody Crew, and the late Plot is not yet over. It is true, we may yet be subject to some effects of their malice and fury. But we use to say, when a Distemper is once discovered, it is half cured. Have not we been hitherto delivered from those Lions and Bears? They contrive, but God disappoints; and if their plotting and designing, though it takes no effect, shall continually fill us with fears and jealousies, how much more should every man be filled with affrightment at the least appearance of that spirit which ruled in the hearts of those Children of Disobedience in the beginning of our late troubles? Shall these men still impose upon us such dreadful apprehensions of those, whose designs have hitherto been blasted, and must we be persuaded that we are out of all danger from those who have so far succeeded in their attempts, as to subvert a flourishing Kingdom, and overthrow both Religion and property? Perhaps if these things were well considered, we should not be so easily Cajoled by them, whose great Cry is for Liberty, when indeed they mean nothing more than Anarchy and Confusion; against Popery, while they mean Episcopacy; that while we are staring at the *Romish Wolf*, we may be surprized by the *Northern Bear*.

We have had of late some Instances of Tumultuary Proposals and Applications, that fell little short of the old Story of *Venn* with his Mermydons, as his late Majesty was pleased to express it; which was onely an Essay of the strength of that Party that cast us formerly into Confusion. But they were seasonably checkt both by the authority and good affections of the City, to the Confusion of their Hopes and Designs. Is not this like *Ab-salom in the Gate*? Is not this the way to amuse and fright men from their Trade and Business? and in effect to

to cry, as of old, *To your Tents, O Israel!* It is a dangerous thing to affect Popularity, and to talk of Papists in Masquerade. But unless we had better marks whereby to distinguish those sort of men, it can onely serve as an odious term to be fixt upon whom himself and his Party pleases; and when time serves, expose them to the fury of an untutoured Zeal, and to be used as Malignant, Delinquent and Popishly affected, were of late; which had no other effect, but sequestring the Estates, and ruining the Families of persons so stigmatized; though indeed they onely were the true Lovers of the Protestant Religion, their King, and Country. We are not to account a Vote of the House of Commons to have the Authority of a Law, (as some would have a late Vote to be,) when as (the Parliament being dissolved) it signifies just nothing as to the matter of Law, though it was an honest and excellent testimony of their Zeal for the preservation of his Majesties person, and the Protestant Religion; for which the whole Nation is bound to give them thanks, but I hope we shall never live to see a Vote, no nor an Ordinance neither, pass for a Law; and I believe this did not speak the sense of the House: and as little did the late out-cry speak the sense of the City, as appears in this, that there are not ten men to be found that will own the action. Beside that, the Faction was over-born by a majority of honest men.

I have no purpose to reflect upon any mans person. My design is onely to caution my Fellow-Citizens, not to have a hand in any action that looks like Faction and Disorder, for from little sparks, many times, are kindled mighty flames: and *Solomon bids us, Shun the appearance of evil.*

Frailty and Imperfection is justly inscribed on all things sublunary. Yet if we could suppose a System of

Rules and Laws infallible, even this could not free the Government from miscarriages, it being morally impossible among such a multitude of subordinate Officers (of necessity to be used) that all should be furnished with Wisdom and Integrity sufficient for discharge of their duty, so that there will always be cause of complaint, but no man can say, that such things will discharge the Subjects from their duty. As to the Constitution of our Government, it hath been reckoned the best in the World; and for the Administration, I dare appeal to any man, whether there is not more rigour and severity, heavier Taxes and Impositions laid upon the People in the most flourishing Christian Kingdom in the World, by three parts in four, than ever we have yet met with, unless in the late Times of Defection. Is any thing imposed upon us (which to remedy) will make amends for Tumult and Disorder, or any danger threatned, or like to befall us, that can equal the mischief and inconvenience of a Civil War. Consider this, Fellow-Citizens, and let not ambitious men purchase their advancement with the price of your Bloud and Treasure. They may contrive with their heads till their hearts-ake, but without help of your hands, all their project will fall to the ground. I beseech you therefore stand fast in your duty to God, allegiance to the King and the Government established by Law. To the first you are obliged by Nature and Religion; to the second, by Religion and Oath; to the last, by Prudence and Interest.

It may be said by the Dissenters from the *Church of England*, that they are willing to obey his Majesty, and observe the Law in all Civil Matters, but in Ecclesiastical Affairs, and Episcopacy, they will not, they cannot yield obedience. My business is not to dispute the point, but to persuade to peace, and to warn you of such men as are like to disturb it. Let it be considered that

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Episcopacy hath received the same Civil Sanction with those Laws that concern Liberty and Property. It is adapted into the Constitution of the Government. Would they have his Majesty abolish Episcopacy by his own power? Surely this would be to exalt Pre-rogative with a witness; and (as themselves would say, in other cases) contrary to *Magna Charta*. If not, let them cease their murmurs, till some Parliament comes that will pull down that, and set up a better, if they can tell where to find it. I confess if any man purely out of conscience refuseth to Conform, and the Laws against it rigorously executed, his Circumstances are hard. But is that our Case? Is not every man suffered to be as good as he will? Doth not the clemency of our King admit every man to hear and preach where they please? to follow their own Pastors, and their own Discipline? And after all this, do you hear men cry out against the Government, the Bishops, and the Clergy, men of honour and dignity in the Church, persons against whom they have no exceptions, but their Office and Revenues, persecuting them with the most vile and unsavoury Language their malice can invent. And is this out of Conscience too? Can any man think he that shuns a Surplice, but can easily swallow a Lie, that exclaims against the Common-Prayer, yet is full of Envy, and hatred, is uncharitable to his Neighbour, and constantly replenished with scurrilous and immoral expressions against every one that treads not in his path: that this is the effect of a *Tender Conscience*. Fly then the Society of this sort of men, for whatsoever their specious pretences may be, their thirst is after Domination and Plunder. Those that trampled upon the Mitre overthrew the Crown, Monarchy and Episcopacy both fell by the same hand: therefore it is not amiss to mind you once more of *Solomons* advice, *Fear God, Honour the King,*

King, and meddle not with those that are given to change.

When you reflect upon the Methods taken in the beginning of the late Wars by an ill-spirited sort of men, whose delight was in Disorder, and aimed at gainful Fishing, if they could but once trouble the Waters, that their first endeavour was to raise a dislike against the Person and Government of the best of Kings, and how the Grand Engineers stirred up the Citizens and Apprentices, to popular Tumults, whereby his Majesty was invaded, and through fear and force, banished from his Palaces, Cities, his Consort, his Royal Children and Family, and at last himself wost barbarously murthered. What contrivance, and by whom carried on? Broils raised in *Scotland*, the better to distress his Majesty, and after all this and much more, not to be mentioned without the extreamest horror and detestation; How the Actors thereof were unmasked, their persons and designs discovered, their several Governments under their most politiek Establishment shaken to pieces as frequently as formed, and at last both the one and the other, not by humane prudence, but by the meer hand of God, destroyed and confounded. In all which mutuations this City felt most constant pains and afflictions; and the whole Nation, after all the vast expence of Blood and Treasure, had purchased to themselves, nothing but Chains and Fetter. When, I say, you reflect upon these things, it must needs excite your singular care to preserve your selves from a subjection to the designs of such men, as may have hopes to lead us again into the like Defection and Inconvenience, and to be afraid of any thing that hath a tendency that way.

F I N I S.